

## **If I Am Eligible How Many Food Stamp Benefits Will I Get?**

How many food stamp benefits you get depends on the number of people in your household and your net income. For example, if your net income is \$500 and there are three people in your household, you will get fewer food stamp benefits than if there were six people in your household.

## **How Do I Apply For Food Stamp Benefits?**

Call or go to the Department of Human Services (DHS) office in any county and ask for a food stamp application form. Complete as much of the information as you can and take or send the application to a DHS office. (We must have your name, an address and your signature.) If you need help completing the application, tell a DHS worker. If you need an interpreter or a large print form, tell a DHS worker. You may apply online at [www.state.ar.us/dhs/dco/index.html](http://www.state.ar.us/dhs/dco/index.html) and click on Food Stamp Application.

## **What Will Happen After I Turn In My Application?**

We must talk to an adult member of your household. We will schedule a time for this interview. (Call the DHS office if you cannot come in for an interview.) During the interview, a county worker will go over your application. Also, the worker will make sure we have all the information we need to determine if you are eligible for food stamp benefits. Please bring the following information to your interview:

- I.D. showing your name
- Proof of your address
- Social security numbers for everyone in your household (Providing SSNs is voluntary. However, you may receive food stamp benefits only for those people who give us a SSN or supply proof that they have applied for a SSN.)
- Proof of the amount of money you or anyone in your household has in any bank account
- Proof of all of your household's income
- Proof of legal alien status for anyone who is not a U.S. citizen

- Medical bills for anyone who is age 60 or older or who receives a disability check based on a full disability

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## **How Long Does It Take To Process An Application?**

If you are eligible, you should have your food stamp benefits within 30 days. If you have little or no income or savings, you could have your food stamp benefits within 7 days. If you are not eligible, we will send you a notice to tell you why your application was denied.

## **If I Am Eligible, How Will I Get My Benefits?**

Your household will get an EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) card. You will use this card to purchase food. A DHS county office worker will explain the EBT card.

## **What Can I Buy With Food Stamp Benefits?**

A person may buy only eligible foods with their food stamp benefits. Eligible foods include plants and seeds that can be used to grow food. **You cannot buy the following items with food stamp benefits:**

- Paper goods
- Cleaning products
- Household items
- Personal care items like toothpaste
- Alcoholic beverages
- Tobacco products
- Vitamins or medicine
- Foods prepared to be eaten in the store
- Hot food prepared in the store to be "carried out" and eaten

## **Is Nutrition Education Available?**

Information about buying and preparing healthy foods



for your family is available through the Cooperative Extension office in some areas. Ask your worker or call the Cooperative Extension office if you are interested.

## **What Are My Rights?**

- To be provided with an application on the day you ask for one
- To have your application accepted at once
- To have another adult make application for you if you cannot come into the office
- To have a telephone interview if no one can come in for you and you are age 60 or older, or you are disabled, or you have a hardship that makes it impossible for you to appear for the interview
- To receive assistance from a county office worker if you need help completing your application or getting some of the information we need to process your application
- To look at your case file and/or the program rules
- To have a hearing if you do not agree with any action we take or if we take too long to process your application
- To be treated fairly regardless of age, religion, disability, political belief, veteran status, sex, race, color or national origin
- To have available forms and instructions in different formats, such as large print

- You must not hide information or give false information to get food stamp benefits

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## **Voter Registration**

You may register to vote at your local DHS office. You must be at least 18 years old and an U.S. citizen.

## **What Are My Responsibilities?**

When you apply for food stamp benefits, you must follow these rules:

- You must answer all questions completely and honestly.
- You must give us proof of some information.
- You must let us know if you need help getting this proof.
- You must not put your money or property in someone else's name in order to get food stamp benefits.

## **We Apply Income Tests.**

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We count the income of all household members. Income includes money from work. It also includes money from sources like TEA, Social Security, SSI, Unemployment Benefits, VA, Child Support, etc.

### **Test 1 - Gross Income Limit**

We do not apply the gross income pretest to households with only aged or disabled members or to households where at least one member receives TEA benefits. If we must apply this test to your household, your gross monthly income must be less than the gross income limits. To figure your gross monthly income, we add together all the money received by you and by the other members of your household. We do not subtract taxes, insurance or household expenses.

### **Test 2 - Net Income**

To figure your monthly net income, we take the following steps:

- STEP 1 - We subtract 20% from gross earned income. (*That is your earned income before deductions for taxes, insurance, etc.*)
- STEP 2 - We subtract a standard amount.
- STEP 3 - We may subtract all or part of your babysitting costs, rent and utility bills, or child support payments. We may subtract part of the medical costs of aged or disabled members of your household.
- STEP 4 – If your household is eligible, we determine your monthly benefit amount.

## **What Is The Food Stamp Program?**

The Food Stamp Program helps people with low income get the food they need for good health. Food stamp benefits are used in place of cash to buy food. Most people must spend some cash along with their food stamp benefits to buy enough food for a month. Participation in the Food Stamp Program is not time-limited. You can continue to get food stamp benefits as long as you are eligible under Food Stamp Program rules. This is true even if someone in your home receives TEA cash assistance.

## **Who Can Get Food Stamp Benefits?**

U.S. citizens and some aliens who are living in the U.S. legally may get food stamp benefits if they meet Program rules.

## **How Do I Know If I Am Eligible For Food Stamp Benefits?**

We must apply certain rules to households that apply for food stamp benefits.

## **For Many Households, We Must Apply an Asset Test.**

NOTE: We will not apply an asset test to any household where a household member receives benefits paid under the Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) Program. The asset test will not apply to any SSI recipient.

Assets are things you own. Examples of assets are money you have saved at home or in the bank, stocks, bonds, real estate, cars, trucks, vans and other types of vehicles. Your total assets must be worth \$2,000 or less unless someone in your household is age 60 or older. If someone is age 60 or older or receives disability benefits, your total assets must be worth \$3,000 or less.

Your home, one vehicle, and most personal belongings are not counted as part of your total assets. Property or machinery you use in your own business is not counted either. For example, if you are a farmer, your farm land will not be counted as an asset.

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If you own more than one vehicle, we will evaluate the status of each vehicle separately. One vehicle will not be counted. In some instances, we may count all or part of the value of additional vehicles as an asset.

## **Discrimination Complaints**

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, political beliefs, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination write:

USDA  
Director, Office of Civil Rights  
Room 326-W, Whitten Building  
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

Telephone: (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD)

You may also write:

Arkansas Department of Human Services  
Office of Employee Relations/Equal Opportunity  
Donaghey Plaza North, Suite 205  
P.O. Box 1437, Slot N205  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437

Telephone - (501) 682-6003  
FAX - (501) 682-8926  
TDD - (501) 682-7958

For information or to make complaints other than discrimination complaints, call toll free 1 (800) 482-8988. In Pulaski County, call (501) 682-8233. For TDD service, call (501) 682-8275.

**IF YOU NEED THIS MATERIAL IN A  
DIFFERENT FORMAT SUCH AS LARGE PRINT,  
PLEASE CONTACT ANY LOCAL DHS COUNTY**

For more information, call your local DHS County Office.

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| COUNTY OFFICE STAMP |

# HOW TO APPLY FOR AND USE FOOD STAMP BENEFITS

Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act and is operated, managed and delivers services without regard to age, religion, disability, political affiliation, veteran status, sex, race, color or national origin.”



## FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Arkansas Department Of Human Services  
**Division of County Operations**

“The Arkansas Department of Human Services is in compliance with